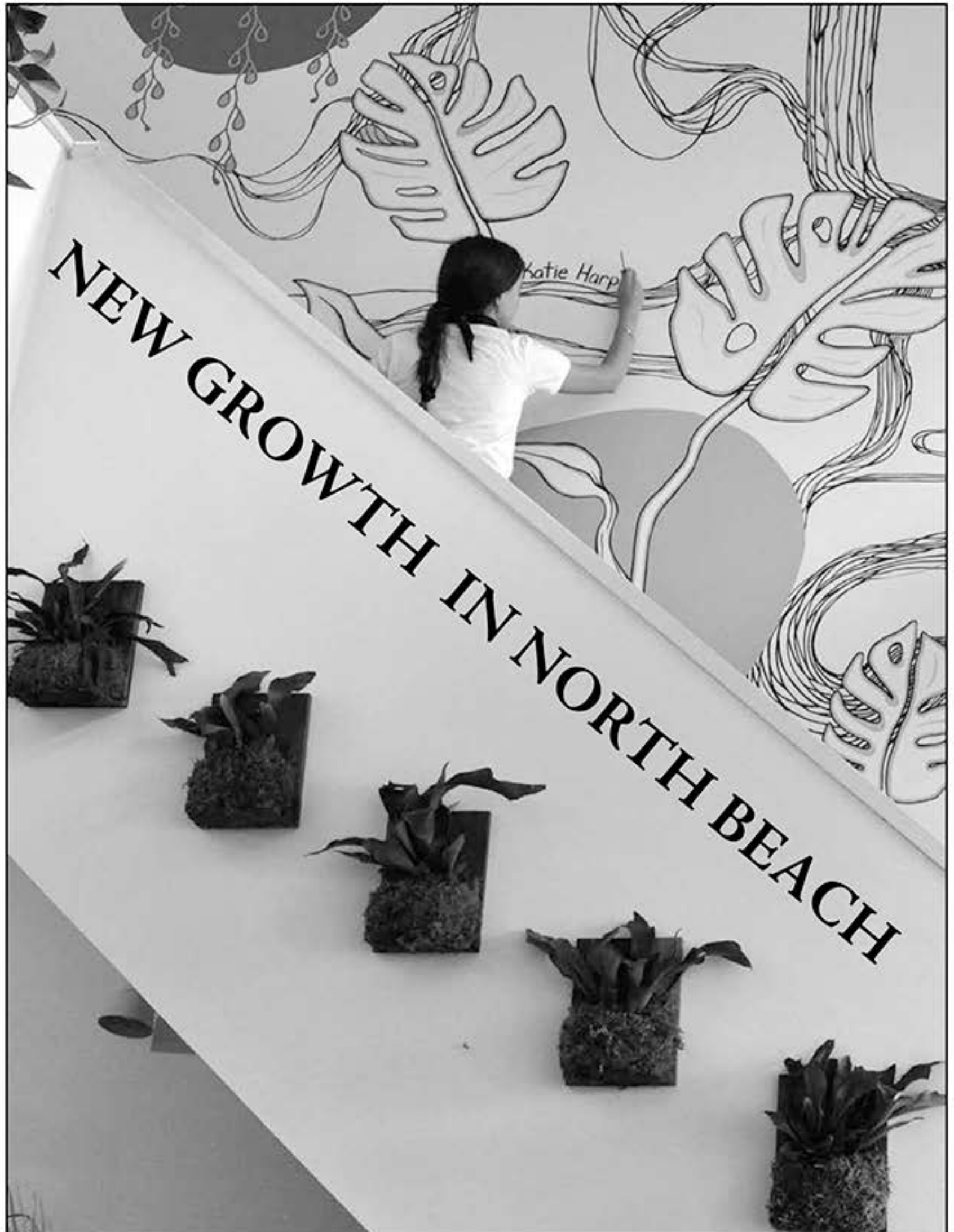


The Semaphore

A Publication of the TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS

Issue 237

Spring 2022



KIDS CORNER

By Sarah Kliban

Welcome to Kids Corner! THD wants to hear from kids in the neighborhood! If you'd like to ask a question, or you're a kid and want to be interviewed, please contact us at kids@thd.org.



LULA WELLAND, 8

If you received a million dollars right now, what would you do with it?
I'd donate it to a shelter because there are a lot of homeless people here.

If you could meet anyone from the past, who would it be?
I actually don't know a lot about people from the past but probably someone who built something big in the city. There is this person named 'Tamu' whom my brother was named after. He was from Africa. I'm really curious about him.

What is the funniest thing you remember?
At school, when a pigeon pooped on my lap during lunch. I called my friends to get a grown-up and they told the Club staff member about it, and he said, "Good!"

If you were the parent for the day, what would your rules be?
No going up to the roof deck unsupervised because it's really dangerous up there. No coming into my office while I'm working. No video games during the week-days.

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ROWAN TELLES, 9

If you received a million dollars right now, what would you do with it?
I would probably give \$100,000 to a charity for homeless people and keep the other \$900,000 for myself. I would probably use about \$300 for myself to buy Legos and then save the rest of it.

If you could meet anyone from the past, who would it be?
I would want to meet the inventor of Legos – because Legos are my favorite toy, and I would want to know what the guy was like. I'd ask him how he came up with the idea of Lego blocks.

What is the funniest thing you remember?
When I used to watch cats and cucumbers videos with my mom. It's just people scaring cats with cucumbers, and the cats do really funny things after they see the cucumbers. If you look up cats and cucumbers on YouTube, you'll find a bunch of videos of cats doing that and people doing that to cats.

If you were the parent for the day, what would your rules be?
You can have 45 minutes of screen time. You can't wreck the house. You can only have 3 pieces of candy a day. And no fighting.



JACQUELINE FORKASH, 6

If you received a million dollars right now, what would you do with it?
Give it to my dad. I would buy a thousand million Barbies.

If you could meet anyone from the past, who would it be?
My grandma Roseeee who died. She used to knit things for me – like necklaces. I miss her.

What is the funniest thing you remember?
When I get tickled. And watching SpongeBob Squarepants. SpongeBob's friend only wears underwear!

If you were the parent for the day, what would your rules be?
Everyone has to buy a zillion Barbies! No snoring. NO PIANO!



TAMU WELLAND, 10

If you received a million dollars right now, what would you do with it?
I'd buy nice furniture for our house, a hammock and a TV for my room. A bunch of new toys and treats for our dog Curry and a subscription to something like BarkBox. Then I would probably give the rest to my mom or my sister. Maybe my dad.

If you could meet anyone from the past, who would it be?
Probably my great-great-grandfather Tamu who has the same name as me. He was born in Africa and he had a really cool job—like herding cows and horses. I'd want him to teach me how to handle cows and horses.

What is the funniest thing you remember?
When my uncle took a shower in the rain in our backyard. We had just gotten back from swimming in the pond. I don't know why.

If you were the parent for the day, what would your rules be?
You can play as much on your video games as you want. You can stay up as long as you want. You could annoy your sister all you want. That's it.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Al Fontes
President@thd.org

This issue of *The Semaphore* marks the end of my first year as President of THD, which started in early May of 2021. The Bylaws allow two consecutive terms, and rumor has it that the Nominating Committee has recommended me for a second year, but this is the last article I'll write in my current term as President.

Looking back at my first *Semaphore* article, in the Summer 2021 issue, I can't imagine how I could have been more mistaken than saying about COVID, "We're finally coming out of a time of great loss..." While the part about a great loss still holds, I suppose I can be forgiven for the mistaken assumption that the world was soon getting out of anything.

Yes, we finally had vaccines that were safe and highly effective, we knew the protocols, and it seemed to me that the end of the pandemic was approaching. But here we are a year later, with hundreds of thousands more lives lost, two more variants under our belts, and a newfound, unwelcome familiarity with the Greek alphabet.

After spending Christmas Eve with my extended family, I had a scratchy throat and slight headache. On Christmas Day, instead of having a feast at my niece's house, I spent one of the loneliest days of my life in bed in a Folsom hotel room. Four days later, despite two vaccinations and a booster, my COVID test came back positive. That led to the dreaded experience of calling a list of family members to say that I had exposed them all to the virus. My silly pride about wearing masks and getting shots dissolved in a realization that I was as human and vulnerable as ever.

Aware of experiences such as this, over the past year the THD Board of Directors attempted to find a balance between safety and mental well-being. As of this writing, the Board meetings still occur via Zoom, although I really hope that we'll start meeting in people's homes again soon.

We had one indoor event. With the arrival of "San Francisco: A Love Story" at Club Fugazi, fully-masked THD members were able to attend a couple of preview

performances of an amazing show, which has replaced "Beach Blanket Babylon" in that beautiful room as a must-see.

Thanks to the hard work of Kate Kaehler, our Social Chair this past year, we had several successful outdoor events. At a couple of informal meet-ups, one at Belle Cora and another at Piazza Pellegrini, people could just join us for a drink and spend some time talking to folks in person. Our annual Holiday Party in December was also held outside at Piazza Pellegrini, with dinner and drinks. These were truly happy events, with smiles all around and people sincerely glad to see one another. In each case, we had some who were grateful that we were holding events in person, while others chose not to attend because they didn't feel safe, even outside.

For this reason, we've also had a nice mix of online events, largely due to the efforts of our Neighborhood Engagement Chair, Nick Ferris. The General Membership meeting in May, when I was elected, was the second time in two years that the official meeting was conducted online. We were pleased to have as our guest Dr. Grant Colfax, Director of the San Francisco Department of Public Health. In August, we presented a conversation between San Francisco District Attorney Chesa Boudin and SFPD Chief Bill Scott. In October, we presented a live, online discussion of the ballot measures on the upcoming November election with Assemblyman David Chiu and Supervisor Aaron Peskin. And in January, we held a debate via Zoom among the four candidates running to replace Assemblyman Chiu and represent us in the California State Assembly.

Clearly, THD's mission is as important as ever. We have seen two especially appalling construction projects in the pipeline, one at 955 Sansome and another in the old Buon Gusto Sausage factory. Both of these projects have been well-covered in the pages of *The Semaphore*, but I recommend all members keep a watchful eye on them.

When it comes to trees, San Francisco has perhaps the most anemic urban tree canopy among America's large cities. Whether you blame neglect, corruption, or just plain incompetence, our beloved trees are not

getting the care or nurturing one would expect of such an enlightened community. This is happening at a time when climate change continues on its path of destruction. THD member Lance Carnes has been surveying many of the young trees in our area and has found that the Department of Public Works (DPW) cannot be relied upon to meet its obligation to water these trees for the first three years. Working with Mike Rothmann, our Chair of Parks and Trees, Lance has been prodding DPW to do its job, and we will continue to support him in this effort.

One of the most enjoyable parts of being on the THD Board is to go out and meet the community. Unfortunately, the North Beach Festival, where we usually meet a lot of people, was not held this year. But we did have a table at the San Francisco Police Department's National Night Out, always an opportunity to spend some time with our favorite police officers. We also had a table at one of the weekly North Beach Farmers Market events, where I was able to meet a lot of nice people, gather a few new members, and pick up some really great strawberries.

Not surprisingly, going into my second term, I can see that there's still plenty of work to do. The state of Shared Spaces, known affectionately as "parklets," continues to evolve. Anyone who's been out for a walk in the neighborhood can see what a mixed result we have with them. Some of these parklets are open, beautiful urban oases, while others are grim, crumbling plywood structures that darken sidewalks and create hazards for pedestrians attempting to cross the street.

The transportation situation in San Francisco continues to be a vexing matter, and our district is as vulnerable as any other. San Francisco County Transportation Authority's Congestion Pricing plan still looms as a potential threat to our local businesses. The construction of the Central Subway continues to be a destructive and wasteful undertaking, and I'm still wondering why they had such an overwhelming urge to replace the 30 Stockton.

The strength and wisdom of THD springs from its members, and we continue to count on you. Yes, your dues pay the bills, but your participation, knowledge, and intelligence are what set us apart from many other neighborhood groups. Once more, I ask you to come to the events. Please consider becoming involved in a committee, perhaps even chairing one. If there's something you love about our neighborhood, or if something is driving you nuts, get involved! Send me an email at President@thd.org, and let's discuss.



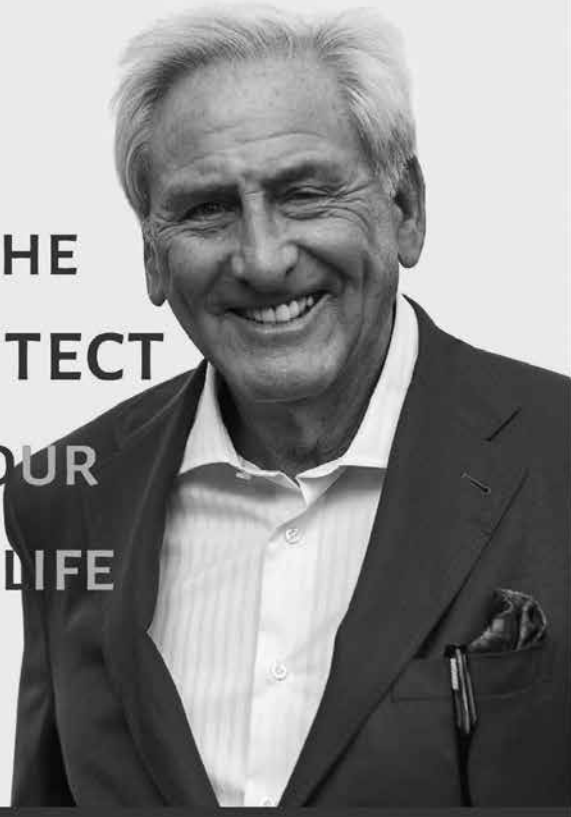
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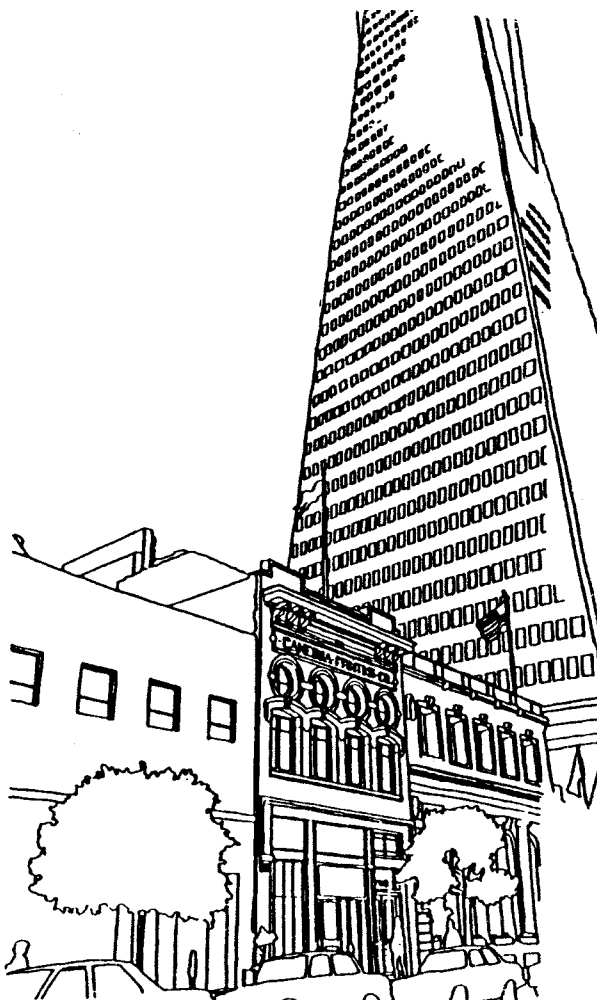
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PARKS & TREES REPORT

by Michael Rothmann, Committee Chair
and Micah Barth Rogers
mike.rothmann@thd.org

The goal of this article is to clarify the current lack of a sustainable program to grow the urban canopy, that is, the tree coverage within a city. Over the years, the responsibility of street tree maintenance has been shared between the Department of Public Works (DPW) and property owners. In 2012, the San Francisco Planning Department commissioned a comprehensive urban forestry plan to transfer the responsibility for all street trees entirely into the care of the city and city-sponsored organizations. Now, the care of trees in the city is divided between DPW and its subcommittee, the Bureau of Urban Forestry (BUF), the Recreation and Parks Department, and private non-profit and community organizations such as Friends of the Urban Forest (FUF) and Mission Verde. With multiple agencies responsible for the care of more than 125,000 city trees, a comprehensive organizational plan is difficult to attain.

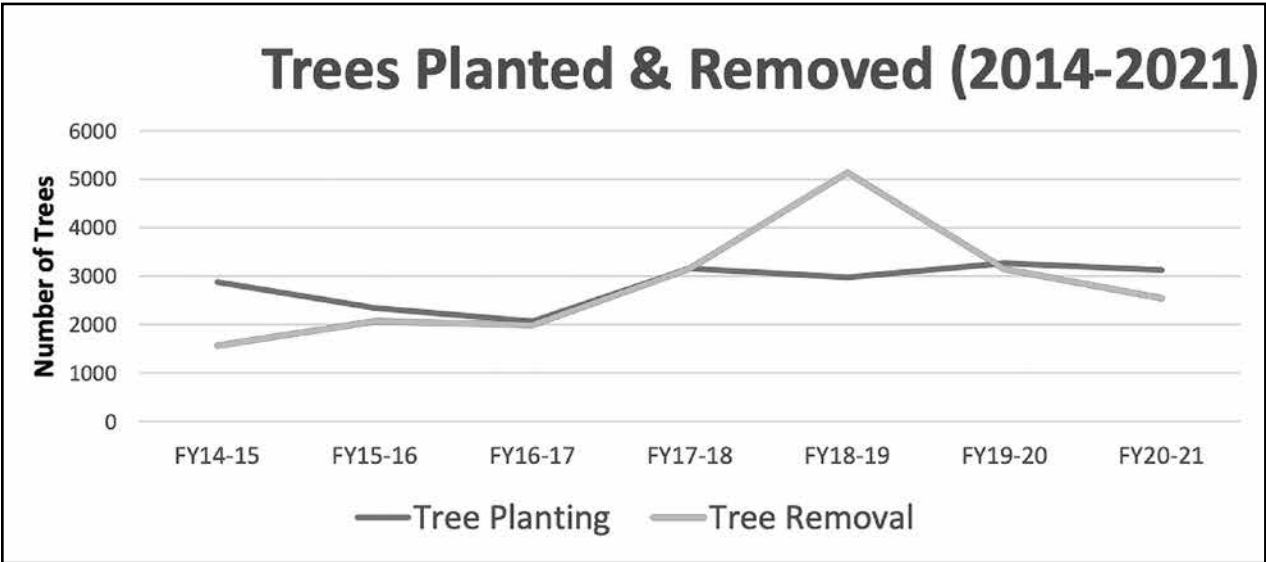
Prior to the pandemic, great strides were made to expand the urban canopy. The urban forestry plan, adopted in 2015 by the Board of Supervisors, sought to expand the canopy by adding 50,000 new trees by 2034. A comprehensive tree census was conducted in 2016-17 by ArborPro, a private urban forest management team. ArborPro was able to inventory the location, species, and condition of 124,795 street trees and identified 40,000 vacant sites for future plantings. The census eventually morphed into the interactive StreetTreeSF map, which can be found on DPW's website.

Proposition E, passed in Fall 2016 and funded by a real estate transfer tax enacted by Proposition W (passed in the same election), provided an additional \$19 million to shift the responsibility of street tree maintenance to DPW and created the StreetTreeSF program managed by BUF. The wording of Prop E was very specific in that the funding could only be used for "the maintenance of trees along public streets and surrounding sidewalks" and not for additional planting.

In 2017, the StreetTreeSF program received the funds and adopted a "worst first" strategy, addressing deferred maintenance, pruning and removing thousands of unhealthy trees. In the same year, BUF and FUF collectively planted nearly 2,000 trees. In subsequent years, the trends have continued, resulting unfortunately in no net gains. Instead of the proposed increase of 2,500 trees per year, what we have seen is a shrinking urban canopy. It's understandable that the care of hazardous and unhealthy trees has been the first priority, but there is no clear path and no budget for the transition from pruning to planting to growing the canopy.

Examining the hard numbers regarding tree planting and maintenance, the cost of planting each tree is \$550, primarily to prepare the basin. Watering a tree until established, typically three years, is \$1,650 per

BUF AND FUF ARE NOT ENUF!



This figure displays the trend of responses from eleven agencies since Fiscal Year 2014-2015.
SOURCE 2021 URBAN FORESTRY COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

tree. Therefore, each tree planted and maintained for three years costs a minimum of \$2,200. The current year's reported budget from BUF for planting is \$2.15 million, which would presumably be funneled directly to FUF. Doing the simple math, with the current budget divided by the cost of each tree, BUF and FUF could plant and maintain fewer than 1,000 trees. Considering the shortfall of the tree planting program to meet its annual planting goals so far, DPW has estimated that it needs to plant 4,000 trees per year to meet its original goal, but there is no money in the budget.

The "2021 Annual Urban Forest Report, Fiscal Year July 2020 – June 2021" states in part, "At the start of the fiscal year, Public Works received news of a de-appropriation of the StreetTreeSF funding in the amount of \$1.2 million and possibly up to \$2.1 million." As a result, BUF canceled equipment orders, paused issuance of tree maintenance contracts, and froze hiring. In light of the existing planting budget shortfall, these new developments are highly disconcerting.

The funding of BUF-supported tree planting is complex. The planting strategy adopted by BUF has been based on transportation taxes (including gas tax), a capital improvement fund, and the Adopt-a-Tree fund. In addition to identifying a \$5.85 million funding gap to plant the 4,000 trees per year required to meet its planting goals, the existing funding sources cannot be relied upon. A recent example: In Governor Gavin Newsom's State of the State address, he proposed cutting the gas tax, which would effectively eliminate the majority of BUF's planting funds.

Nick Crawford, the acting superintendent of BUF, explains, regarding the funding structure: "That mechanism is really difficult for hiring staff, purchasing equipment, and creating a program for tree planting if it changes every year."

Our canopy is "anemic," as District 3 Supervisor Aaron Peskin put it frankly at a recent committee meeting. "We have to up this game if we're gonna get anywhere close to 4,000 a year," said Peskin. "We have to be honest and transparent with the public about

what we've been able to achieve, what we've learned."

It is inherent in us, even as children, to seek green spaces as refuge and respite. The unique light and climate of San Francisco are two of the qualities that make the city so special. Both are reliant on the health and proliferation of the tree canopy. It must be a top priority for all of us. New ballot measures specifically designating funds for watering and planting are one path. Volunteer organizations like Mission Verde and educational green-job training that fill in the gaps to cover the costs of planting and maintenance are also an option. Organizing individuals and neighborhoods to assume more responsibility rather than waiting for city government could help to solve the problem. The first steps include recognizing that for all of us, the health of our trees is directly related to our own health and the health of the city.

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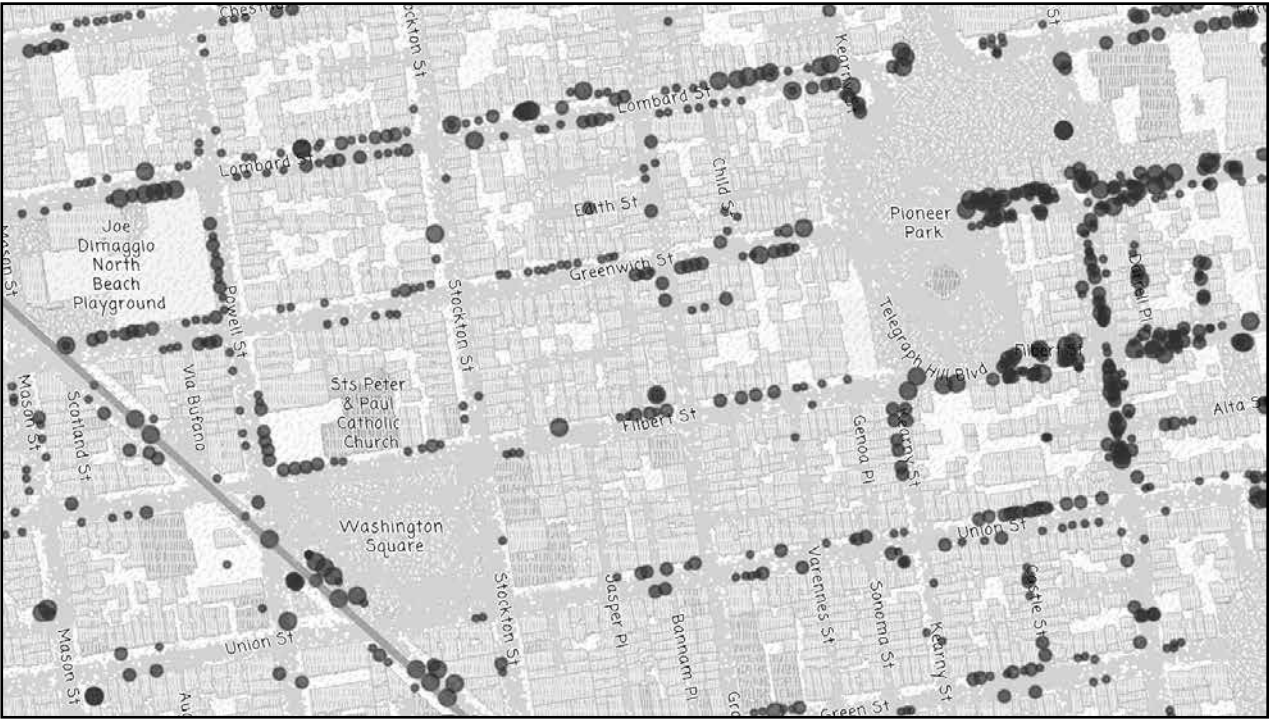
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Screenshot of the North Beach section of the StreetTreeSF map showing location and approximate size of each tree.
SOURCE <https://sfpublicworks.org/services/street-tree-map>

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DISTRICT 3 SUPERVISOR REPORT

by Supervisor Aaron Peskin
aaron.peskin@sfgov.org

The signs are everywhere that a resilient San Francisco is springing back!

Club Fugazi has celebrated its first full-capacity milestone, bringing the cathartic message of its “Dear San Francisco” performance to an expanded audience with a new locally sourced menu. I’m thrilled to announce that my office has been working with the Lopez family to open their legendary taqueria, El Farolito, in North Beach and also recently staved off the potential eviction of beloved downtown lunch spot, Sai’s Vietnamese Restaurant.

In other exciting news, months of work to bring in a new local grocery tenant have resulted in Luke’s Local signing a lease to open a full-service neighborhood grocery store at 580 Green Street (the long vacant Citibank building on the corner of Columbus Avenue and Stockton Street), slated for a December opening. We also celebrated the inaugural reboot of Noodlefest the last weekend of April, a food festival joining the culinary and cultural traditions of North Beach and Chinatown. My office has been working on bringing back this event for the past year in an effort to build community and support local restaurants hit hard by the pandemic. Thank you to those who bought tickets!

Finally, nothing illustrates the hopeful potential of a spring comeback like the Bloom SF hearts sprouting throughout San Francisco’s downtown, lovingly hand-crafted by the talented floral designers at the historic SF Flower Mart to beautify our commercial corridors and welcome tourists and workers back.

Remembering Kathy Dooley

There is one person I know who would have loved to see these life-size floral art sculptures urging San Francisco back to life, but, sadly, she passed earlier this spring before she could tour them in person. Kathleen Dooley was a dear friend and neighbor and one of the chief reasons I got involved with the fights to save the SF Flower Mart over the last decade. She opened her Columbine Flower Shop on Grant Avenue in 1985 and

quickly established herself as the go-to for unique floral art that incorporated everything from Victorian oddities to insect exoskeletons (cementing her nickname as “the Bug Lady of Telegraph Hill”).

A former modern dancer, Kathy had a creative core that informed every endeavor throughout her life. I appointed her to the Small Business Commission in 2008 where she became a vocal champion for neighborhood-serving businesses and “the little guy.” In North Beach, she was an anchor of the North Beach Business Association, helping to conduct business surveys and aggressively recruiting local merchants to fill storefront vacancies, including the popular Cole Hardware.

She wrote grants to secure beautification funds for Broadway and Jack Kerouac Alley, never wavering in her belief that a vibrant commercial corridor could thrive with the right number of fresh flower baskets. Her advocacy did not end in Telegraph Hill and North Beach, though, and she would rally to support community causes citywide, including Chinatown.

Many remember her as an activist who fought to get her neighbors into housing and helped advocate for low-income tenants. She never minced words and always spoke her mind, even if the odds weren’t in her favor. It’s a great loss, and I and many others will truly miss her.

It’s Election Season—AGAIN!

Here’s a brief summary of a few ballot measures I’ve sponsored on the ballot for your consideration this June 5th:

Yes on Prop C, Recall Reform is a good government measure that limits the ability of outside special interests to waste millions of taxpayer dollars in low-turnout recall elections in the same year as a general election for that same elected seat. It does *not* prohibit recalls but would impose reasonable reforms to rein in an out-of-control and costly issue that two-thirds of all California voters have asked be addressed in the wake of Newsom’s \$200 million recall effort.

Yes on Prop E, Behested Payments is an ethics law reform taken directly from the Controller’s Public Integrity Review that would address behested pay-

ments, when city officials (like former DPW Director Mohammed Nuru) raise money from interested parties who have contracts, permits, or other administrative or financial matters pending before them. Behested payments have become the preferred loophole for special interests that want to get around laws that prevent outright bribery and corruption.

Yes on Prop F, Recology Reform brings garbage ratepayer advocacy, regular audits, and anti-corruption safeguards to the City’s management of residential and commercial garbage and recycling contracts in the wake of recent revelations that Recology had overcharged SF ratepayers millions of dollars. Prof F has broad support.

See you in the neighborhood,
Aaron



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NEIGHBORHOOD ENGAGEMENT REPORT

by Nick Ferris, Committee Chair
nick.ferris@thd.org

Loving your fresh produce? The tastiest strawberries you've ever had? Gourmet hummus? Or how about FreshWay Fish? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you must be a regular at the North Beach Farmers Market.

The Market started its fifth season on April 30. For me, one of the originators, it's been both lots of hard work and a labor of love. The Market started in the parking lot next to Piazza Pellegrini, thanks to the generosity and support of the restaurant's owner, Dario Hadjian, who donated the space. Last year and as a result of the pandemic, the Market was able to move to its current, beautiful location on Greenwich Street between Columbus Avenue and Powell Street.

Most of our vendors are back this year as well as many new ones, including additional produce suppliers and prepared food vendors. (Did I hear breakfast tacos?) Unfortunately, a few aren't able to return yet, due to the ongoing labor shortage that has forced many farms and vendors to reduce operating capacity.



The opening day of the North Beach Farmers Market in 2021 was joined by celebrity chef Martin Yan and local celebrity chef Tony Gemignani.

In addition, there is a lot going on at THD. By the time you read this, THD, along with co-sponsoring D3 and D6 organizations, will have held the April 6 second debate between David Campos and Matt Haney, candidates for State Assembly District 17, and a new assemblyperson will have been elected.

Now that the world is opening up, THD will host a monthly neighborhood "happy hour" at Belle Cora (565 Green Street) on the second Thursday of every

month at 5:30 pm. Members have told us how much they've enjoyed these events, so our goal is simply to bring folks together, catch up on life, learn what's happening in the neighborhood, and give people more opportunities to get involved. The first official "happy hour" was scheduled for April 14, and our upcoming one will be on May 12. Add to your calendar summer "happy hours" June 9, July 14, and August 11.

In mid-May (details to be announced via email, the THD website, and our Facebook page), Neighborhood Engagement will have an in-person town hall event with District Attorney Chesa Boudin. The District Attorney is facing a special recall election on June 7 during California's Statewide primary. Voters will vote simply "yes" or "no" on whether he should be recalled. While THD can never take a position on candidates, this is an important event for our city, and we urge our members to spread the word about this in-person town hall.

Last, we'd love for more members to get involved. If you have ideas on events for the neighborhood or issues you think THD should take up, please drop me a line, and I'd love to discuss via phone or coffee. I can be reached at nick.ferris@thd.org.



TRANSPORTATION REPORT

by Howard Wong, AIA, Committee Chair
howard.wong@thd.org

Putin's Ukraine War Impacts Transportation

From the world's population of 7.9 billion people, can one person change the course of transit and transportation? Yes, at least in the short term and maybe longer, as Vladimir Putin's Ukraine War triggers rippling gas prices, uncertain supply chains/travel patterns, and reassessments of fossil fuel dependency. The Ukraine War gives rise to a renewed debate about more oil drilling versus accelerated green energy/transport. Long-drawn-out new oil leases will not protect us against future oil crises, while setting back climate goals to cut greenhouse gas emissions—perpetuating schizophrenic energy policies.

While politicians need to ease the pain of high fuel prices for businesses/jobs/workers that rely on vehicles, opportunities exist to advance public transit and climate change adaptation. California's governor has proposed a gas tax suspension and \$400 debit cards for registered car owners, while proposing free public transit for three months and funding for biking/walking/zero-emission vehicles. In reality, a humungous dramatic shift away from our car culture is necessary. Over

the years, transit modal share of all trips has changed little. San Francisco has a 25% transit mode share with 48% trips by driving (23% by walking). The Bay Area has 74% trips by driving (64% in single-occupant vehicles). Combined with new work and technology patterns, the Ukraine War offers a tipping point towards a new mobility future.

Patriotic Duty to Ride Public Transit

Public transit, walking, biking, and non-powered mobility are paths away from fossil fuel dependency and free up available oil supplies for the global energy chess game of embargoes and resource politics. Along with renewable energy investments, individual mobility choices are patriotic, tangibly affecting the demand-side of the oil supply crisis—for the public good.

Simpler Immediate Transit Improvements

Other cities around the world have created reliable transit systems in relatively short timeframes and at economical costs—with transit mode shares as high as 60%. Meanwhile, San Francisco has spent billions of dollars on big transit projects, which take decades to complete but with marginal benefits. Given the energy crisis, San Francisco needs an accelerated green transit strategy.

SIMPLICITY: Restore and improve Muni service with quick micro-projects, especially for those who are transit dependent. Repair most heavily used infrastructure. Emphasize cleanliness, courtesy, customer service,

and design quality for a classy Muni brand and product.

FAST: Create a frequent network of routes for convenient access to all parts of San Francisco rather than focusing on trips downtown. Bus lanes, transit signal priority, car-free zones, transit queue jumps, and free neighborhood bus loops are tools available to increase ridership. Prioritize keeping customers informed, e.g., with brightly-lit digital signs at transit stops and on vehicles. Coordinate transit transfers at intersecting lines—to minimize wait times—by tight scheduling and bus stop proximity. Implement simple streetscape improvements that are beautiful, functional, and people/transit friendly.

COORDINATE REGIONAL TRANSIT: Start immediate coordination and sharing amongst all the regional transit agencies and private shuttles, to maximize effectiveness of overlapping routes, technology, operations/ maintenance expertise, and resources.

CASE STUDIES: Document examples of other cities' transit systems that have quickly implemented transit-priority streets, bus rapid transit, street management, technology and innovations, e.g., Zurich, Seattle, Portland, Curitiba, Bogota, and Guangzhou.

LEADERSHIP: City/public leadership is needed to get the most transit service for the least money expended in the shortest timeframes—because it's possible.



Streetcar on the Embarcadero, bound for Caltrain Station.
© HOWARD WONG



Open air streetcar on the Embarcadero.
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The 8-Bayshore bus on Columbus Avenue.
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see page 11

A NORTH BEACH

by Ken Maley

During the Gold Rush era of the 1800s, the area from the waterfront, along Pacific Avenue (aka 'Terrific Street') to Kearny Street, became known as the 'Barbary Coast,' the roughest vice district, establishing a deservedly wide-open-town reputation.

The Barbary Coast catered to men with money, with prostitution, saloons, dance halls, and "bawdy houses" where those gents could gamble and enjoy the pleasures of sex. San Francisco had the highest proportion of saloons in the nation. The center of what became known as the 'North Beach District' was first formed by a colony of Mexican and South American prostitutes who settled on the south slope of Telegraph Hill (along Montgomery Street). But when anti-prostitution efforts outlawed the brothels in 1917, the Barbary Coast shut down.

The 1930s post-prohibition reorganization of the liquor industry set the path for queer social movements. (There is little evidence of lesbian bars or public places prior to the repeal of prohibition.) Policies concerning alcohol control became the single most important impact on San Francisco's queer public life. The 1930s witnessed the growth of smaller entertainment venues like nightclubs, circumventing liquor regulations. By staging inexpensive entertainment, the clubs encouraged a "specialized" clientele, no longer needing to appeal to large and diverse audiences.

North Beach became a major center of gay life until the mid to late 1960s. The first of several North Beach "gay bars" were founded by gay women. The first lesbian nightclub, Mona's, was established on Union Street at Varnes Street, then later moved to 140 Columbus Avenue. Through 1936, Mona's was referred to as a "bohemian" club, a euphemism for sexual unconventionality. Nightclub-style entertainment venues included waitresses dressed as men, singing parodies of popular songs.



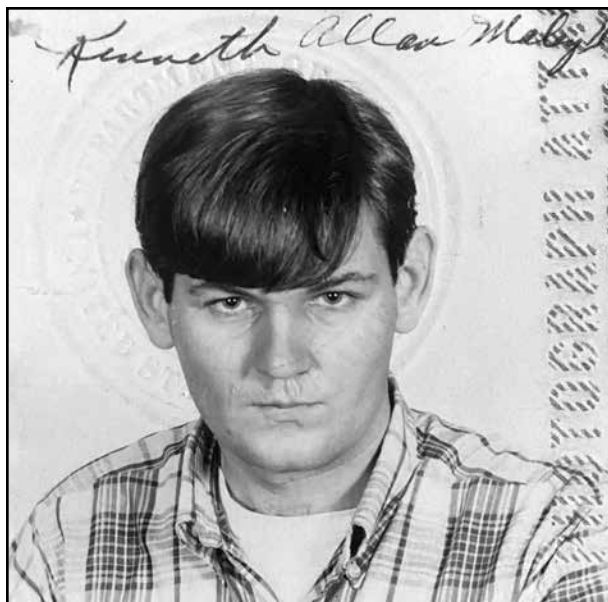
Male Impersonators at Mona's, circa 1945.
COURTESY GLBT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The intimacy of nightclubs made surveillance of inside activities difficult for enforcement. Entertainment was again sought to draw a more "specialized" clientele, and the queer subculture that encircled it moved to this sphere of entertainment. As a result, gender-transgressive and visible queer culture flourished in the City's tourist districts. The 1940s saw the emergence of bars and nightclubs appealing specifically to a queer following.



Photo: Henri Lelou (circa 1968)
Copyright © GLBT Historical Society

Paper Doll street sign.



Portrait of the author as a young man (1966).

© KEN MALEY

Following the arrest of Mona's proprietor in 1938 for keeping a "disorderly house," the club moved to 440 Broadway, continuing entertainment of male impersonators. Mona's advertised in tourist magazines, noting, "little girl waitresses look like boys, the girl singers look like boys, and many of the little girl customers look like boys." This incorporation of lesbian and transgender entertainment into the City's tourism economy encouraged the growth of a queer culture with multiple versions of gender.

Through the 1940s, more than a dozen lesbian and gay bars populated North Beach. The majority were lesbian-owned and operated. Cheap rent, food, drink, and the "bohemian" atmosphere of North Beach encouraged a population growth of like-minded residents. Lesbians and gay men rented rooms on Telegraph Hill, and North Beach became the City's first lesbian neighborhood.

Both gay and lesbian bars post-prohibition evolved a culture bound to the sex trade, influenced by moral reform movements. The bars emerged in relation to sexual and radicalized entertainments becoming visible on or near Broadway, the "tourist" vice district. Gay and lesbian bars were shared by gay men and lesbians, but some clubs like Mona's attracted more lesbians, whereas the Beige Room attracted primarily gay men.

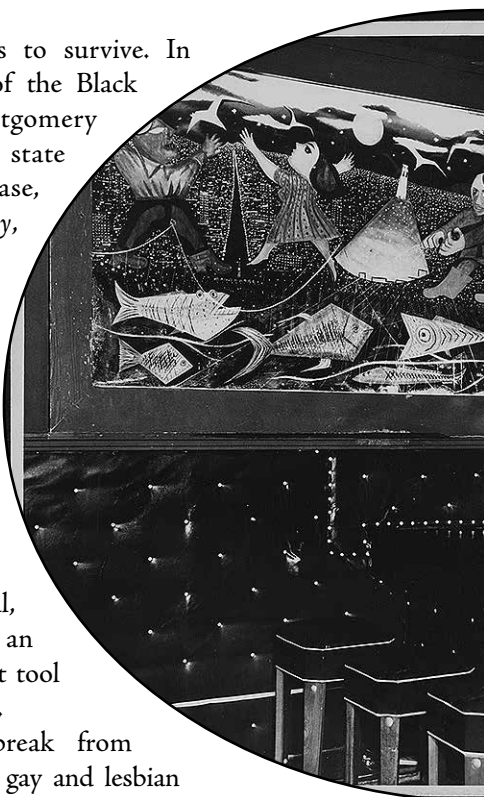
With the advent of WW II and the McCarthy era, the '40s and '50s dramatically changed the atmosphere for almost all City entertainment venues, especially in North Beach. During the war, over 1.5 million service personnel shipped out of Fort Mason, the SF Port of Embarkation. With the presence of a new, vast, transient population, facing unknown futures, San Francisco provided temptations and diversions of many persuasions.

Between 1942 and 1951, exercising "wartime" powers, the military, coordinating with local and state authorities, targeted areas they called "disease and disorder." This was at odds with San Francisco's attitudes, history, social tolerances, the growing acceptance of open, gender-transgressive and queer culture in public spaces. Under the guise of "protecting" service members from these "undesirable" elements, queer entertainment venues became vulnerable to surveillance and regulation.

Cited with endless infractions, owners developed

defensive strategies to survive. In 1951, the owner of the Black Cat (710 Montgomery Street) won a state Supreme Court case, *Stoumen v. Reilly*, affirming the right to serve alcohol to homosexuals, and more explicitly, the right to public association. This decision overturned the presumption that gay bars and taverns were illegal, briefly disrupting an effective harassment tool of policing agencies.

During the break from policing (1951-55), gay and lesbian bars proliferated, especially in the North



Paper Doll
COURTESY BARAK

Beach district: Tommy's Place, 12 Adler, Miss Smith's Tea Room, the supper club Gordon's (where a man wore a jacket and tie or was ignored). The Paper Doll and Dolan's attracted a strong following, solidifying their patronage. The queer community grew despite the McCarthy-era politics, and the post-war culture of conformity was challenged as gay bars became more visible.

As "public institutions," gay bars enabled queer and transgender populations to sustain publicly visible



524 Union Street today—c
© BARAK

urban spaces. These establishments legitimized a space where it was not an insult to assume others were gay,

facilitating a shared public culture. North Beach gay bars often functioned as community centers. As a result, the queer bar-based community pooled resources, developing the foundation for political mobilization a few years later.

The Black Cat was listed by the military as "off limits and out of bounds," prohibiting armed forces personnel in or out of uniform. Still, its popularity soared, in part due to Jose Sarria, a nightly entertainer. He started waiting tables, began singing and later dressing in drag. His performances transformed the Black

COURTESY GLBT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

H GAY HISTORY



Interior.
K SOVAL SMUCHA

Cat into a social and cultural center for queer communities. Sarria grew so popular he attracted audiences upwards of 300 a show. Gay waiters and regulars protected their space with defensive behaviors, quickly assessing anyone as an outsider. As the Beat culture began to take up residence in North Beach, Beats introduced a new level of unconventionality. Some historians suggest the “homeroitics” of Beat poets contributed to the development of queer culture and politics. Not so. Although the two cultures overlapped,

they remained distinct. Beat writers asserted a reinterpretation of male sexuality that ran counter to the homophobia of cold war America, but the culture remained too narrow to influence the queer culture or community.

In response to *Stoumen v. Reilly*, the California legislature created the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board (ABC) in 1955. Using undercover agents and dubious state regulations, the ABC vigorously attacked gay



an LGBT Historic Landmark.
OVAL SMUCHA

bars. But several lower court cases affirmed the right to public association. Defending their establishments from police intrusion, owners came to understand the power of collective action. Defending the right of public association soon became a struggle to defend individual privacy rights.

Stoumen v. Reilly protected the public assembly of homosexuals as long as patrons remained orderly. The ABC, however, expanded the definition of “illegal acts,” suggesting any behaviors signifying “homosexual” were illegal. Simple acts such as random touching, mannish clothing, limp wrists, high-pitched voices, tight clothing, same-sex dancing, kissing, caressing, and hand holding were defined as a violation of laws regulating public decency.

(Personal memory: My favorite North Beach haunt in the 1960s was the Capri, at 1326 Grant Avenue. It was lesbian-operated and a very exciting venue. Same-sex dancing was prohibited in the gay bars, but the Capri had great music and allowed dancing, so the room was always packed. The lesbian at the

door, Pat Bond, carefully screened patrons, and when suspecting someone might be ABC or SFPD, she would quickly turn up the lights. It was understood we had to stop dancing and stand in place until the lights went back down.)

The ABC and the election of George Christopher as mayor in 1956 transformed the organization of policing in San Francisco, responding indirectly to civic concerns about liquor-related crime and homosexuality. Mayor Christopher’s reorganization of the SFPD, in line with the ABC, “declared war on homosexual bars in San Francisco,” reviving wartime anti-homosexual campaigns.

Under the direction of then California Assemblyman Caspar Weinberger, the California legislature undermined *Stoumen v. Reilly* further by amending the California Business and Professions Code, allowing ABC to investigate any bar functioning as a “resort for sexual perverts.”

The ABC and SFPD launched attacks on queer public spaces. The police chief directed district captains to “keep gathering places of homosexuals under constant pressure.” The directive ordered police beat cops and plainclothes investigators to alternate visits to places queers congregated, “because homosexuals do not like the presence of police, and they will not frequent places visited by the police.”

Police questioned young people, and “obvious homosexuals of the effeminate type” were singled out. A patrol car or wagon parked outside a homosexual hangout just before closing time was to frighten customers and discourage further patronage. Beat cops were instructed to forward names, addresses, places of employment, and physical descriptions of people questioned or arrested to sex crimes investigators so a list of “known homosexuals” could be assembled.

The Paper Doll had operated smoothly on Union Street since its opening in 1949. When Dante Benedetti purchased the bar in 1956, he chose not to pay off the police. The Paper Doll was one of four bars the ABC filed actions against, based on undercover agents testifying they had been solicited by men in the bar. The ABC hearing in 1957 concluded the establishment functioned as “a resort of sex perverts.” Benedetti appealed the decision twice before closing the bar in 1961.

The epicenter of San Francisco’s gay culture has migrated neighborhood to neighborhood during the past decades: from the Barbary Coast, the Tenderloin, North Beach, Market Street from Seventh Street to Powell Street, Union Square, Polk Gulch, South of Market, the upper Fillmore. Since the early ’70s, the Castro District has become known as one of the world’s most recognized. Each period contributed to the “pursuit of happiness” for gay people and an inspiration for the advancement of gay rights around the world, as the City moved from those days of persecution to the more welcoming attitude of today.



Two boy-friends or two girl-friends, perhaps?

COURTESY KEN MALEY

On June 25, 2019 (Gay Pride Day), the Board of Supervisors approved landmark #287 for 524 Union Street, the location of the Paper Doll. The building is one of only four city landmarks based on LGBTQ cultural heritage and the only one not in the Castro District.

Perhaps it’s time to have a bronze plaque installed commemorating the gay and lesbian history of North Beach.



Attributions and Acknowledgments:

The amazing *Wide Open Town: A History of Queer San Francisco to 1965* by Nan Alamilla Boyd was the primary source for this *Semaphore* Gay Pride feature. I could find no better source. I am grateful for the author’s detailed research that brings to light a long-overlooked gay history of North Beach and our City. I highly recommend this important book to anyone interested in the subject.

Issac Fellman, Reference Archivist at the GLBT Historical Society was graciously patient and helpful in providing guidance through the Society’s archives for information and photos.

Barak Soval Smucha, whose family owns 524 Union Street, provided background on the landmark designation.

Suggested further reading: *Streets of San Francisco: Policing and the Creation of a Cosmopolitan Liberal Politics, 1950-1972*, by Christopher Lowen Agee.

Check out: GLBT Historical Society Museum, 4127 18th Street, San Francisco.

Next Gay Pride Weekend, June 25-26, 2022

NORTH BEACH QUEER BARS AND RESTAURANTS, 1933-1965 (PARTIAL LIST)

1. Black Cat	710 Montgomery	1933-1963
2. Mona’s (original)	431 Union Street	1934-1935
3. Mona’s Barrel House	140 Columbus	1936-1938
4. Finocchio’s	506 Broadway	1937-1999
5. Mona’s 440	440 Broadway	1939-1948
6. Artist’s Club	345 Pacific Street	1946-1949
7. Mona’s Candlelight	473 Broadway	1948-1957
8. 299 Club	299 Broadway	1948-1952
9. Paper Doll	524 Union Street	1949-1961
10. Chi Chi Club	467 Broadway	1949-1956
11. Gordon’s	840 Sansome Street	1949-1970
12. Opus One	141 Columbus	1951-1959
13. Beige Room	831 Broadway	1951-1958
14. Ann’s 440	440 Broadway	1952-1962
15. Tommy’s Place	529 Broadway	1952-1954
16. 12 Adler Place	12 Adler Place	1952-1954
17. Tin Angel	987 Embarcadero	1954-1960
18. Miss Smith’s Tea Room	1353 Grant Avenue	1954-1960
19. Copper Lantern	1335 Grant Avenue	1955-1965
20. The Front	600 Front Street	1958-1961
21. Anxious Asp	528 Green Street	1958-1967

COURTESY GLBT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

KATHLEEN DOOLEY, NEIGHBORHOOD ICON

by Marc Bruno

Kathleen Dooley passed away on Monday, March 14.

She was a longtime contributor to the work of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, to the City of San Francisco, and, in particular, to North Beach. Kathleen was the past president of the San Francisco Small Business Commission, using her many connections to stand up for the City's tradition of compassion, tolerance, and a helping hand to those in need.

It was an unusual week when Kathleen did *not* call me or another St. Vincent de Paul member to help her provide outreach to someone living on the streets of the Embarcadero or North Beach. She contributed to every one of our holiday meals, making sure guests were surrounded by her gifts of garlands, greenery, and flowers. She had been volunteering for the organization since 2001.

Kathleen was a California girl who grew up surfing in Redondo Beach. She moved to Manhattan in 1968 and danced with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. Returning to California in 1980, she explored her passion for flowers and natural beauty by opening a florist shop in North Beach and joining neighborhood groups to preserve the City's architecture and increase open space. In addition to providing unusual flower arrangements, Kathleen's store, Columbine Design, was an entomologist's dream. Giant spiders and exotic butterflies lined the walls. Local designers and artists often shopped there, includ-



ing Metallica and Tom Waits.

Kathleen was often quoted in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. She lobbied fiercely and successfully to retain the century-old wholesale Flower Mart in San Francisco, a property scheduled for sale in 2015. The developers whom she fought were quoted as saying Kathleen's grass-roots advocacy nearly drove them into bankruptcy. Her boxer, Jack, became a mascot for the many old-time Bay Area farmers whose families depended on their ability to reach florists directly through the Flower Mart she saved.

Kathleen also threw herself into the lives of North Beach families. It was common to find her babysitting at Columbine by giving local kids a way to occupy their day when parents couldn't be home. As a Small Business Commissioner, Kathleen was instrumental in developing a "Legacy Business Program," which allows family-owned businesses a relief from ever increasing rents. More than 100 local businesses are now helped by this designation.

As president of the North Beach Business Association, Kathleen fought the extraction of the Central Subway machinery from Washington Square and the adjacent intersection, which would have had a devastating effect on the park she loved and the businesses she represented. By joining a court case to stop the City's destructive actions, Kathleen helped preserve the neighborhood for generations to come. She never did anything halfway, and all of us are much better for it.

May she rest in peace.



FAREWELL TO REPLENISH GROCERS

Erika Gliebe, proprietor of Replenish Grocers at 968 Columbus Avenue, wrote *The Semaphore* editors with the sad news that she had to close the store. Judy Irving, who knows Erika personally as a fellow Bay swimmer, wrote this to her in response:

This is so sad! I understand how hard it is to open any business during a pandemic, and a new-concept, no-plastic, all-bulk store at that.

Yesterday I bought some pita chips and hummus, both, unfortunately, in plastic containers. I thought, "We're doomed. How can I do this?!" But I bought them and walked out of Nature Stop...because I was hungry. I felt guilty: more plastic that may or may not get recycled. You know the drill.

Your re-education of our community won't stop when the store closes. I know I won't forget the lessons learned at Replenish, and I will keep trying to turn those extra efforts into habits. But even for well-meaning people, it's hard to do the right thing when the right thing requires extra effort. Meanwhile, our culture, our society, our political institutions, our lawmakers need to nudge the no-plastic agenda along so that doing the right thing doesn't just fall on individuals but on the corporations that produce all this crap with no consequences to their bottom lines.

You are ahead of your time, Erika, and I applaud you.

Erika replied:

Thank you, Judy! Your words mean the world to me. And it's a journey in so many ways! We are all on it. We may never get to zero waste and that is ok. And it is ok if you had hummus and chips in plastic. Progress not perfection! I am honored to have brought much more awareness and I know I have inspired so many. Just the fact that you had the thought and the awareness is a huge step in the right direction. I am grateful for inspiring others, wonderful conversations and so many other beautiful experiences I have had over the past two to three years.

We will miss Replenish!



Sale sign at Replenish Grocers.

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PETITE MONSTERA NORTH BEACH PLANT STORE

—A PANDEMIC SILVER LINING—

by Katherine Petrin

In seeking a Covid-19 silver lining, we need look no further than to our neighbors at Petite Monstera North Beach Plant Store. This small, but mighty, plant shop opened on August 15, 2020, when the pandemic was in full swing. Owned and operated by North Beach residents DJ Dashnyam and his business partner, Stephen Brown, the enterprise was born of the owners’ resourcefulness and adaptability, together with the huge encouragement of Lynette Spiegel, owner of nearby Jeffrey’s Natural Pet Foods.

Because of the mandatory 2020 closure of their Bay Street gym, Fit Life Training Studio, DJ and Stephen switched it up and opened the plant store within five months (while continuing to train gym clients by Zoom). From operating a gym to dealing in plants, you might wonder how that happened. Actually, DJ and Stephen were well acquainted with the utility of houseplants, using them to work wonders at the gym. They found plants neutralized gym odors and kept the air clean and fresh. When their plant supplier, a small, family-owned nursery in Half Moon Bay, suggested they open a shop, they agreed. Monstera, DJ’s favorite type of plant, seemed the obvious choice as a name for the shop because of its resilience.

Just before the store’s inauguration, the owners were pleasantly surprised to be contacted by Supervisor Aaron Peskin’s office, which offered to assist with a grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony. The grand opening was also attended by Fady and Ida Zoubi of the North Beach Merchants Association and Small Business Commission President Sharky Laguana.

The enterprise was a success from the start and has thrived throughout the pandemic, largely because of support from the North Beach neighborhood, says DJ. During the pandemic, people turned to plants for a richer home environment, for solace, and to make their Zoom backgrounds cooler. DJ, Stephen, and DJ’s sister, Tammy, are all hands-on in the way they run the business. They are super friendly, neighborly, and knowledgeable about each and every plant.

Located on Powell Street between Filbert and Greenwich Streets in the space formerly occupied by Studio Patro Linens (now found on Russian Hill at



The interior of Petite Monstera is filled with plants of all sizes and varieties.

© KATHERINE PETRIN

1898 Hyde Street), the compact Petite Monstera Plant Store is wonderfully packed. The interior is dense and tidy, filled with gorgeous emerald-green plants of all sizes and varieties. Favorites like calathea, rubber plants, and fiddle leaf trees fill the space. The shop also sells a variety of items by local artisans, including a mix of decorative planters by Berkeley artist Hani Salazar of Solid Studio, pots by famed ceramic artist Nina Saltman of sfcayworks, and greeting cards by Kara.

On the shop’s north wall, a slinky, sultry floral mural by Katie Harper rises above the staircase, making the shop feel more intimate, personal, uniquely North Beach. (See her painting it on the cover. By the way, this is just one of several murals by Katie Harper found in North Beach. She has painted others for businesses: Jeffrey’s Natural Pet Foods, Balanced Bites, Wonderous Salon, Hotel Caza, and Donburi Ya Restaurant.)

One customer describes Petite Monstera North Beach Plant Store as a hidden paradise with a cool, relaxing vibe. Clients

appreciate the large selection of unique plants, the fair prices, and the engagement of the congenial owners.

One giant key to their success is the shop’s hang-out vibe and the warmth of the owners. For them, it’s clear that their business is a venture for enjoyment, a vehicle for fun. DJ says they like to keep things light and easy. They welcome neighbors to drop by to chat in front of the store on sunny days or anytime to discuss neighborhood happenings, what’s going on with other local businesses and at Sts. Peter and Paul where DJ’s daughters go to school. Another goal, assuming license is obtainable, is eventually to sell wines by small, local producers, further highlighting the all-things-local flavor of this business.

If you’re in the neighborhood and ready for an uplifting green experience, drop into this gem of a store, Petite Monstera, at 1821 Powell Street. The shop is open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from noon – 6 pm and Sundays, from 11 am – 5 pm. Closed on Mondays. Free delivery in the neighborhood. Be sure to ask about their discounts: 20% for health care workers, teachers, firefighters, and police officers. Local merchants receive a 25% discount.

VIRTUAL BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS JANUARY—MARCH 2022

by Mary Lipian, Recording Secretary
mary.lipian@thd.org

January 2022

THD hosted a successful virtual debate on January 26 among David Campos, Matt Haney, Bilal Mahmood, and Thea Selby, candidates for State Assembly District 17. The assembly seat became open when Assemblyman David Chiu resigned to accept his new position as City Attorney. Alex Clemens, Founder of Lighthouse Public Affairs, moderated the event.

Dennis Richards, a 25-year resident of San Francisco and former Planning Commissioner, discussed with the Board a proposed state initiative to put zoning decisions back under local control in response to SB-8, SB-9, SB-10, legislation sponsored by Senator Scott Weiner that has preempted such control. More than a million signatures are needed by late April; Richards is encouraging people to sign the petition and support the bill. (See <https://ourneighborhoodvoices.com>.)

February 2022

THD is drafting the 2022-2023 THD budget. At the next THD Board meeting, the Board will review a draft budget. The new budget year begins April 1, 2022.

THD is preparing the social calendar

of events for the year and encouraged suggestions. Events that are currently being planned include a jazz night, a wine pairing event at the SF Wine Center, a poetry night, and an August BBQ block party.

March 2022

THD is forming a subcommittee to discuss redistricting options so that THD can offer input.

The Board formed the 2022-2023 Nominating Committee to develop a proposed slate of Officers and Directors to be presented to the THD General Membership for approval. The five Nominating Committee Members are Cap Caplan, Nick Ferris, Greg Giachino, Stan Hayes, and Nancy Shanahan.

Nick Ferris presented the proposed budget for the Board to review for the 2022-2023 year. The budget will be voted on at the April THD Board Meeting.

Diane Oshima and Brad Benson from the Port of San Francisco presented the San Francisco Waterfront Plan and the Waterfront Resilience Program, the latter of which is intended to strengthen the Port’s ability to handle hazards such as shoreline erosion, sea level rise, and climate change. The Port is interested in community engagement and partnerships. The Waterfront Plan draft EIR has been published and is open for public comment until April 25, 2022.

This month, THD members will vote on the 2022-2023 slate of officers and directors proposed by the Nominating Committee.

2022 Nominees for THD Officers & Board of Directors

Officers

PRESIDENT: Al Fontes
VICE PRESIDENT: Nancy Shanahan
RECORDING SECRETARY: Mary Lipian
CORRESPONDING SECRETARY: Melissa Dong Mountain
TREASURER: Nick Ferris
FINANCIAL SECRETARY: Andy Katz
HISTORIAN: Termeh Yeghiazarian
PAST PRESIDENT: Stan Hayes
SEMAPHORE EDITOR: Cap Caplan

Directors: Term 2022-2024

Theresa Flandrich*
Michael Rothmann*
Nanci Gaglio*
Nadya Williams

Directors: Term 2021-2023

Kristen Foley*
Katie Hopkins**
Kate Koehler**
Greg Giachino**

* New Board Members
** Directors whose term has not expired
Other Officers and Directors are nominated to serve for an additional term.



PLANNING & ZONING REPORT

by Nancy Shanahan, Stan Hayes, and Mary Lipian,
Committee Co-Chairs
PZ@thd.org

Here are updates on several important matters that the Planning & Zoning Committee continues to follow.

955 Sansome—An Oversized Building, Getting Bigger. As you might recall from our Report and an accompanying article in the Winter issue of *The Semaphore*, a developer, Aralon Properties, is proposing to build a luxury condominium project to replace the existing two-story garage at the corner of Sansome and Vallejo Streets. The site is located in the Northeast Waterfront Historic District, immediately below the densely populated historic residential area uphill along Vallejo.

Originally, the developer proposed an eight-story, 24-unit project. Despite the overwhelmingly negative reaction to the over-sized height and scale of the project from the community, the developer then proposed an even larger project, more than doubling the number of units from 24 to 57 and increasing the building height from eight to ten stories, rising 120 feet from the building's base on Sansome to the top of its large rooftop mechanical penthouse. While 14 units would be "affordable," just five would be affordable to low-income families (that is, those earning 80% of the area median income).

Not only would the proposed project significantly exceed the heights of adjacent historic buildings within the Northeast Waterfront Historic District along that portion of Sansome (averaging 43 feet in height), but it would greatly exceed the height and mass of all the residential buildings in the uphill block of Vallejo. Zoned at 40 feet, these residential buildings are also historic, being within the North Beach Historic Survey Area and determined to be eligible for listing on the California and national historic registers.

In February, SF Planning issued a notice of environmental review, announcing that it is in the initial stages of environmental assessment of the project and inviting public comment. THD submitted a letter in response. Among its comments, THD argued that:

- The number of units is too many for this site. The 57 residential units proposed by this project would be more than twice the zoned maximum density of 24 units.
- Many of the units are multi-story. Twenty-one of the units would be townhouses two stories in height, including nine two-story penthouse units.



TREASURER'S REPORT

by Nick Ferris
nick.ferris@thd.org

As longtime readers of *The Semaphore* will know, April 1 means the start of THD's fiscal year. As I am closing the books for 2021-2022, THD looks to finish with a little more than \$1k in positive net income, which means we were able to live within our means and even save a little. We generally target a break-even year, so this is a healthy place for us.

The Budget Committee met in February to prepare a budget, the THD Board discussed it in March, and by the time you read this, the budget will have been officially approved. After the recent successes of in-person events, the biggest change to the 2022-23 budget will be the allocation of additional funds to social and neighborhood events. The committee and board all felt that one of THD's purposes, if not the biggest, is to foster community. With the pressures of the pandemic, we're all in need of a little more socializing.

- The square footage of the units is excessive. The average unit size would be twice the average neighborhood unit size, with the largest units nearly three times that of a Telegraph Hill neighborhood average.

THD further argued that the excessive height, mass, and scale of the proposed building would significantly and impermissibly impact the historic district, as well as adjacent and nearby historic resources. You can find a copy of THD's letter online at thd.org/pz.

The project is being processed under San Francisco's HOME-SF program, which among other things, requires priority processing, with final action within 180 days of the submittal of a completed application.

We will let you know as more develops.

535 Green—Historic Buon Gusto Building at Risk. As we have written in earlier P&Z Reports, the developer of this State Density Bonus (SDB) project proposes to construct a 63-ft, six-story + basement parking garage, 34-unit residential/commercial building on the site of the historic Buon Gusto Building and the vacant parking lot to the east. As proposed, the new building would reach up to 79 feet at the highest point of its roof-top features—twice the 40-foot zoned height limit.

A revised project plan was filed by the developer in March. In it, the developer proposed a 19-space commercial parking lot on the basement level in place of the residential and commercial storage previously proposed. Those spaces would be marketed as a commercial garage, with the usership and ownership unbundled from the residential units. Invoking the SDB law, the developer proposes that City planning code prohibitions be waived to enable the proposed garage.

The Buon Gusto Building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The revised plan continues to propose that the interior of the Buon Gusto Building be "demolished." That would leave only the building's outer shell, most of which would be subsumed by and disappear into the proposed new building. Because the Buon Gusto Building is listed on the National Register, this SDB project requires an environmental impact report before it can proceed to approval actions required by the Historic Preservation Commission and the Planning Commission. The developer has hired a consultant to prepare the environmental impact report working at the direction of SF Planning.

We'll keep you posted on further developments.

1235 Sansome—Cliff Development, Not Again!

In the Winter 2019 issue of *The Semaphore*, we stated in our P&Z Report our absolute surprise and firm opposition to a then-proposed 110-ft, 10-story apartment building at 1235 Sansome. The building, which was being proposed by an out-of-state (and clearly uninformed) developer, would have hung from unstable, near-vertical cliffs, just to the west of the intersection of Sansome and Union Streets.

We recalled then the steep hillside whose collapse resulted in the demolition of a multi-unit residential building, the steep cliffs that gave way near Julius' Castle, crushing a car and narrowly missing a residential building, and the cliffside boulders that crashed down onto Sansome where cars park and people walk. All of these occurred within a quarter-mile of 1235 Sansome, two of them within 200 feet and one of these at nearly that exact same location.

We concluded that "This building does not belong there; it's an unstable, unsuitable, and unsafe site, which should be obvious to everyone." The project disappeared. So much has changed in life since 2019, but with respect to development of this lot, nothing has changed; yet another proposal may be in the offing. It's now being marketed for sale at \$998,000, along with renderings showing a purported nine-unit residential building, five lofts and five cottages or a 9,000-sf estate home. (See 1235sansome.com.)

One hopes these misguided plans disappear like the last ones. But, in any event, we'll keep an eye on this.

P&Z Webpage—Updated. We have now posted on the P&Z page on THD's website a number of letters and other references that you might find of interest. These include:

- Two THD letters concerning the proposed project at 955 Sansome and links to an online opposition petition, now signed by more than 350 persons
- THD letter concerning 425 Broadway
- A congestion pricing letter prepared by THD and co-signed by five other community and neighborhood organizations
- Links to a statewide initiative to restore local planning control throughout California (initiative sponsor and initiative text).

To join, or to get information from, the THD Planning & Zoning Committee, just send an email to PZ@THD.org.



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THD COMMITTEES NEED YOU

Get involved in our neighborhood and make a difference! Join a THD
committee and help keep the Hill a special place to live.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Art & Culture: Open
Budget: Nick Ferris nick.ferris@thd.org
Membership: Andy Katz THDMembership@gmail.com
Oral History Project Manager: John Doney oralhistory@thd.org
Transportation: Howard Wong howard.wong@thd.org
Parks & Trees: Michael Rothmann michael.rothmann@thd.org
Planning & Zoning: Nancy Shanahan, Stan Hayes, and Mary Lipian PZ@thd.org
Semaphore: Cap Caplan (Editor) cap.caplan@thd.org
David Lipkin (Photo Editor) david.lipkin@thd.org
Social & Program: Kate Kaehler social@thd.org
Waterfront: Howard Wong howard.wong@thd.org

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMITTEE MEETS last Thursdays
of each month. Call for time and location.
986-7070 or 563-3494 or 391-5652.**

LIAISONS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Central Police District Community Advisory Board: Daryl Babbitt
Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods: Al Fontes
Friends of Washington Square Liaison: Don Raichle
Northeast Waterfront Advisory Group Member: Open



TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS

Voice Mail: (415) 843-1011. Web Site: www.thd.org
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Recording Secretary: Mary Lipian
Corresponding Secretary: Melissa Dong Mountain
Treasurer: Nick Ferris
Financial Secretary/Membership: Andy Katz
Historian: Termeh Yeghiazarian
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Semaphore Editor: Cap Caplan

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Term: 2020-2022

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WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS!

**There's no better way to be connected to your neighborhood and be a voice of the hill
than by joining Telegraph Hill Dwellers today.**

Join at THD.org. If you'd prefer to have a brochure and sign-up form mailed to you, please send an email to
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Membership includes:

- A one-year subscription to news & events via email and a quarterly publication, *The Semaphore*.
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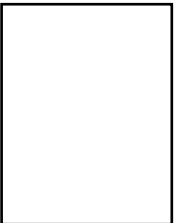
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TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS
P.O. Box 330159
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